Functions of Central Board of Excise and Customs

3162. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the functions and duties of the Central Board of Excise and Customs;

(b) whether a number of cases of corruption against officers of the board are reported in recent times; and

(c) if so, the measures proposed to wind up such boards and execute their jobs in the Ministry itself?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) deals with the formulation of policy concerning levy and collection of Customs and Central Excise duties, prevention of smuggling and administration of matters relating to Customs, Central Excise and Narcotics.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The question of winding up the CBEC does not arise. The issue of corruption is, however, constantly under close watch. Several steps have been taken to minimize the scope and possibilities for corruption. These include continuous simplification of rules and procedures, increasing use of information technology to reduce the interface of the members of the public with the staff of the Department, tightening of the vigilance machinery, posting of officers of integrity and efficiency in the Departmental vigilance organizations.

LIC's special cell to settle death claims

3163. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Life Insurance Corporation's Staff Union has demanded that the Corporation should introduce twelve hour business in two shifts and a special cell for doorstep service to settle death claims; and